

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2001

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

I. ROLL CALL:

Present, Commissioners: Parsons, Mathewson, Wiecha, Gibson, Torre, Petersen, Feierbach

Absent: None

Present, Staff: Community Development Director Ewing, (CDD) Principal Planner de Melo, (PP) City Attorney Savaree, (CA) Recording Secretary Flores

Introductions and Welcome: Chair Parsons welcomed Coralin Feierbach to the Planning Commission, after confirming that she had been duly sworn in and noting that she had served on the Commission prior to the arrival of any of the present members.

Principal Planner de Melo introduced Dia Swan, new employee in the Community Development Department serving as an Associate Planner/Housing Specialist.

Special Presentation: Chair Parsons presented former Commissioner Tom Peirona with a plaque for his wall in recognition of his seven years of service on the Planning Commission. The plaque was not available when he resigned.

II. AGENDA STUDY SESSION:

PP de Melo informed the Commission that the Public Hearing items to be discussed have been reduced to two for the following reasons:

Item 7B - 2884 Wakefield Drive - Was continued to the November 20th meeting to enable the applicant to work through some issues related to the project design.

Item 7C - 1201 Shoreway Road - After having reviewed some of the comments in the staff report, the applicant has elected to come back with a revised proposal; the item will be continued to a date uncertain.

Item 7D - 550 Island Parkway - The applicant, Nextel Communications, has some issues in relation to technology for the project and has requested an approximate 6-week continuation to a date uncertain.

- III. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None**
- IV. **COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments): None**
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**

1. Minutes for October 2, 2001

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Torre to approve the Minutes of October 2, 2001 as changed.

Ayes: Mathewson, Gibson, Torre, Petersen, Parsons

Noes: None

Abstain: Wiecha, Feierbach

Motion passed 5/0/2

VI. STUDY SESSION:

Review of final Landscape/Irrigation Plan and Retaining Wall Design for a Single-Family Residential Project at 2020 Alden Street consistent with action taken by Planning Commission on February 20, 2001.

PP de Melo presented the staff report, recommending that the Commission approve the proposed landscape/irrigation and retaining wall plan as attached.

MOTION: By Commissioner Torre, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson, to approve the landscape/irrigation plan and retaining wall design for the single-family residential project at 2020 Alden Street.

Ayes: Wiecha, Gibson, Torre, Petersen, Mathewson, Parsons

Noes: None

Abstain: Feierbach

Motion passed 6/0//1

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing – 1110 Alameda de las Pulgas. To consider a Preliminary Design Review application to construct a new 54,458 square foot Belmont Library within the Belameda Park property. The new two-story library will house books, periodicals, and audiovisual materials, and includes group study, tutoring, and computer areas and an 80-seat community room. The proposed building includes a subterranean parking garage with spaces for 62 vehicles and 24 additional uncovered spaces within the 2.98-acre project site. (Appl. No. 01-0363); APN: 045-024-060; Zoned: A (Agricultural); City of Belmont, Applicant/Owner

PP de Melo presented the staff report, outlining three topics that he felt the Commission should focus on in this preliminary stage of the development and noting that members of the scoping committee and the architect were available to present the final details of the proposal.

David Braunstein member of the Library Task Force, addressed the Commission and introduced fellow committee members City Manager Jere Kersnar, Director of San Mateo County Library Services Paul Underwood and Architect Christopher Noll. He explained the process the Committee used to arrive at the preliminary plans and answered the questions raised in the staff report.

Chris Noll, architect, presented a photo montage of the proposed project, and described the plans in detail, and answered questions from the Commission,

Paul Underwood, Director of San Mateo County Library Services, stated that Kathryn Page Associates had been hired to create a library building program that included a needs assessment involving community input through a series of focus groups and public meetings, and in consultation with the present library staff and the county library administrative staff. Conclusions of the needs assessment were as follows:

Population has grown, subsequent needs have expanded and the library has stayed the same.

Space is needed for a community room, story-time and other programs and activities, as well as room for more books, videos, dvd's and technology materials for students, adults and seniors.

The library's current collection of books is approximately 1.45 volumes per capita; plan guidelines for libraries suggests there should be 2.5 to 3.0 volumes per capita.

People want acoustical separation of program areas to provide places where students can study and children can have their programs without impacting others who want quiet reading.

Current library's existing seating capacity is 35 seats; new library would have approximately 168 seats, or 6 seats per 1,000 population served.

Library currently has 10 public access computers, which are in constant high demand. Demand is expected to grow as the library makes an increasing variety of information resources available via on-line technology. 54 computers for the public are recommended.

The level of daily visitors to the Belmont library is anticipated to double when it opens and to grow by about another 50% by the year 2020.

Mr. Noll summarized the presentation by noting that 75.5% of the citizens of Belmont supported the referendum on the location, arrangement, distribution of land use and the intensity of the land use, and agreed to tax themselves to build a new library. He added that at two recent public meetings one individual mentioned that they had captured the spirit of Belmont and no one questioned the appropriateness of the land use, arrangement or intensity.

Chair Parsons asked for any comments from the public.

Walt Shjeflo, 2523 Dekoven Avenue, a member of the Recreation and Parks Commission and the Library Task Force, stated that the Commission had dozens of meetings with the public and also went over the plans with the architect and a landscape architect. He felt that the parking underneath is the key that made the plan work, and believed that all of the buildings around the site are higher than the proposed library. With regard to the park area, he spoke in support of the plans for the play area, the amphitheater, picnic area, bus stop and plaza and felt that the design of the site is attractive from the front and every angle.

Joan Peceimer, 2724 Monserat and President of the Friends of the Belmont Library, stated how impressed she has been with the work that has gone on behind the scenes, and believes that most of the town is completely behind the project. She asked the Commission to "give birth" to the library in the speediest process possible so that the project will be on schedule to meet all the demands in the time frame for the grant.

Carol Kittermaster, stated that she approves heartily of the whole project, but would like to see a "green building" design and photovoltaic roof shingles considered.

Concerns and suggestions from the Commission were as follows.

C Mathewson:

Need to find a storage place for current books Senses that the front setback isn't large enough

For security purposes, a gate at the back that could be locked at night and opened during the daytime might be a solution The footprint feels slightly large but may not be Consider eliminating 2 or 4 of the outside parking spaces in favor of more landscaping

Traffic issues will have to be considered

Use drought-resistant plants

Backflow preventers need to be screened so as not to destroy the beauty of the project

C Feierbach:

Concurs that the backflows in every development in the City have been very prominent and ugly and could hurt the appearance of this library - need to be screened and hidden

Encourage as many evergreens as possible and suggested cascading rosemary or something similar to soften the retaining wall

C Gibson:

Entrance and stairs in front appear to be forbidding - need to be sensitive to the requirements of people who have difficulty walking

C Petersen:

Concerned about security of funding plans. Suggested that they have a "Plan B" be in case the second half of the funding doesn't materialize

C Torre:

Consider drought-resistant, California native and non-allergenic plants
Seemed crowded between the front of the building and the Alameda de las Pulgas
For security reasons, would like to see waiting areas for pickup of children that are not right on the street
Would like to see Italian fountains.
Would not say that the building must be moved back, because of the trade-offs that would have to be considered; but would like that to be a consideration.

C Wiecha:

Concerns the Commission has about site layout, if any, should be focused on at this meeting since the faster the project is moved along, the better the chances are of securing the grant funds
10'-high retaining wall is close to the streetscape - could be softened or obliterated with landscaping
Not very accessible-friendly
Maneuvering the garage may be difficult, especially for senior community
Would hesitate to request that the building be moved further west because of the topography on that part of the site.
Wants to preserve the windows. The corner with the Community Room could possibly be reconfigured.
Echoed the comments regarding looking at green design alternatives. Get away from toxic materials and utilize energy-saving types of building construction and designs

Chair Parsons:

Parking may not be enough, considering the number of seats in the library and the community room and the number of employees
Impact of a 3-story building up against the sidewalk will look like a downtown.
Could lessen the impact on The Alameda by taking out a few of the trees in the back and pushing the library back another 10-12' so that the footprint could be the same. This would allow more landscaping in front of the building and the security issue along the street would be improved as children would not have to walk so close to the street, and it would not impact the park.
The height of the building is probably appropriate for the neighbors on the south.
Traffic getting in and out of the parking lot will be addressed in an environmental document
Feels that there is a consensus that the Commission does not want to see the 18' building on top of the 10' retaining wall right up against the street. Wants to keep Belmont green and attractive. If it is moved back, the footprint may have to be changed slightly so that the building is not quite so far into the hillside. He isn't saying that there can't be a wall there, but that it should not be up against the sidewalk.
Walls if big and tall could become magnets for graffiti.

Responding to C Feierbach's question and subsequent discussion regarding how much closer the proposed building is to the street than the current building, Mr. Noll reminded the Commission that the drawings are conceptual drawings and the next phase of the design will include full topographic surveys and tree locations. At that time they will be able to very clearly show the Commission exactly what they have in mind in this regard.

At 8:30 p.m., C Parsons declared a 5-minute recess.

Public Hearing – 2520 DeKoven Avenue: To consider a Conditional Use Permit, Design Review, and Variance Application to allow a wireless communication facility by Metro PCS on a property with a Residential General Plan Designation and to allow a maximum height of 55 feet where the maximum allowed height for monopoles is 50 feet. The project consists of antennas concealed within a cylindrical screen to be mounted on a monopole and attached to a water tank on the

east side of the site, and a new equipment shelter to be located on the south east corner of the site. This project also includes co-location of this facility with another wireless telecommunication facility on the same site. (Appl. No.01-0088); APN: 043-272-400; Zoned: R-1B Residential;CEQA: Categorical Exemption; Applicant: Peter Clement, Whalen & Co., Inc. for Metro PCS; Owner: Belmont Water District

PP de Melo summarized the staff report, recommending approval.

Bill Waterman, representative of PCS, answered questions from the Commission, stating that no additional lines will be required on the utility poles serving this antenna.

C Mathewson confirmed with staff that the FCC limits the Commission's review on this item to design and aesthetics.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Wiecha, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed.

C Mathewson stated that he hates to see this kind of equipment in Belmont, and will vote "no" for aesthetic reasons.

MOTION: By Commissioner Torre, seconded by Commissioner Petersen, to approve the resolution recommending approval of a Conditional Use Permit, Variance and Design Review to allow a wireless communications facility by Metro PCS at 2520 DeKoven Avenue, with the attached conditions.

Ayes: Torre, Petersen, Wiecha, Gibson, Feierbach, Parsons

Noes: Mathewson

Motion passed 6/1

Chair Parsons announced that the item can be appealed to the City Council within ten days.

NEW BUSINESS: None

VIII. REPORTS, STUDIES, UPDATES, AND COMMENTS

CDD Ewing reported the management consultant who has been looking at the City's permit processess would be making a presentation to the City Council on December 11th. Chair Parsons asked that the Recording Secretary send an E-mail to the Commission to that effect.

Regarding the Ralston Village Project, PP de Melo polled the Commission regarding a possible field trip to the Peninsula Regent site. Since C Torre will not be able to vote on the project and C Mathewson had previously toured the facility, they were not interested in the tour. It was agreed that the remaining Commissioners would go on an individual basis or in pairs.

Regarding scheduling items for the Planning Commission agenda of Wednesday, January 2nd, PP de Melo asked Commissioners to let staff know within the next few weeks whether or not they will be able to attend a meeting on that date.

Responding to C Parsons' question regarding the U-Haul site, PP De Melo stated that he has had discussions with both ATT Wireless the U-Haul owner. The Code Enforcement Officer has been diligently pursuing this matter, and they will be coming back with a proposal; he expects a resolution within the next few days.

C Wiecha suggested that an occupancy permit should not be issued for the facility on 6th Avenue until Landscape Plan issues have been fulfilled. C Mathewson stated that he is considering drafting a response to recent letters to the editor which appeared in local papers regarding delays in issuing permits on this project.

C Peterson requested that the liaison for the City Council meetings take notes and share them with The Planning commission. C Torre stated that she probably will not have the time to write notes and such action was not a required part of the liaison role. She thought the purpose was to answer questions of the Council about actions taken by the Planning Commission, not to inform the Planning Commission on what the Council has done. C Parsons noted that the liaison is appointed and is not required to attend the meeting unless Council asks or feels that there is something on the agenda that is sensitive. C Petersen agreed to attend the next Council meeting since C Wiecha will be doing a presentation to the Millbrae City Council.

Regarding tree hugging taking place on a recent Sunday in the 2200 block of Coronet Boulevard, C Mathewson asked staff to determine if there was a construction project in progress that was not approved for Sunday work.

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m. to a regular meeting on November 20, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP

Planning Commission Secretary

Audiotapes of Planning Commission Meetings are available for review

in the Community Development Department.

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment